

INDUSTRY SUPPORT OF BVD CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE



A BVD Code of Good Practice that has been produced recently by Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) and DAERA has been given full backing by industry organisations represented on the BVD Implementation Group. AFBI, AgriSearch, AVSPNI, LMC, NIAPA, NIMEA, NIVA and the UFU have supported the development of the code, which gives farmers helpful information about how BVD can be controlled and eradicated in individual herds.

While identification and removal of BVD Persistently Infected cattle are the keys to controlling the disease, in order to achieve eradication, the transient infection of other cattle must be prevented. The Code describes strategies to deal with BVD at the farm level, including good biosecurity to keep BVD out and to stop the virus spreading in a herd, purchase protocols, vaccination, testing procedures, isolation, culling, and cleansing and disinfection. Advice is also given around how to deal with BVD Positive and inconclusive cattle to avoid herd restrictions.

Steps that are taken now to prevent BVD entering a herd or to stamp out any existing infection will reduce the risk of BVD herd restrictions being applied in the future. Grace periods will only be in place for a limited time; herd restrictions will be applied immediately to herds and their associated herds on disclosure of a BVD Positive or Inconclusive result from 1st February 2026. In addition, when DAERA's computer system is sufficiently developed, herds that have been restricted due to the presence of a BVD Positive animal will have individual restrictions placed on females of a breeding age (12 months and over); these restrictions will remain in place after herd level restrictions are removed until action is taken to resolve their BVD risk status. It is important not to ignore any evidence of BVD that is present in a herd now.

There is an ongoing concern around the risk of infectious cattle being present in the population of untested cattle. Owners of cattle with a 'BVD Unknown' (BVDU) status are urged to test them as soon as possible, to find out their BVD status. From June 2025, herd restrictions will be applied to herds with 20 or more BVDUs, and the threshold for movement restrictions will be reduced in subsequent months. Any cattle that were born before 1st March 2016 that do not have a BVD Negative status directly or indirectly will contribute to this count.

Key actions that can be taken to avoid restrictions being imposed on a herd are to:

- Ensure that the death of a BVD Positive or Inconclusive animal is notified to DAERA promptly.
- Check that all animals in your herd and any associated herds have a direct or indirect negative BVD status. Any cattle that have a BVDU status (including cattle born before 1st March 2016) should be tested, either using a supplementary tag or following blood sampling by your private vet.

The introduction of BVD herd restrictions in NI should lead to a significant improvement in progress towards eradication, thereby improving animal health and welfare and reducing the impact on farming families.

The BVD Code of Practice is available on the AHWNI website at www.animalhealthni.com.



BVD Code of Good Practice



An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department of
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

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